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C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 000480

SIPDIS

OFFICIAL INFORMAL

FOR SA/INS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/18/14

TAGS: [AMGT](#) [CE](#) [MV](#) [LTTE](#)

SUBJECT: OFFICIAL INFORMAL NUMBER 043 (03/18/04)

Classified by Ambassador Jeffrey J. Lunstead for reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

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LATEST RE KARUNA SITUATION

[1](#)1. (C) FYI. In a long interview with TamilNet posted on March 17, London-based LTTE spokesman Balasingham has made his first public comments on the Karuna situation. Balasingham said the Tiger split between the north and east was not a major politico-military crisis and that the LTTE would deal with it soon. (The sheer length of the interview, however, would tend to indicate that it is a major issue for Balasingham and the LTTE!!) In the meantime, the LTTE radio station, "Voice of the Tigers," has announced that the LTTE leadership in the Vanni has formally retracted its previous offer of amnesty to Karuna if he returned to the fold.

REPORTED KILLING IN EAST

[1](#)2. (C) FYI. According to press reports, a worker with the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC) was killed in the Eastern District of Ampara on March 16. While some news reports have portrayed the man's death as politically related, we have heard that the man may have died of natural causes. If it is a politically-related killing, it would be the third death associated with the election campaign. (POL)

MRS. MCCAIN'S VISIT

[1](#)3. (U) Cindy McCain, wife of Senator John McCain, was in Sri Lanka March 15-17 as a guest of the HALO Trust (demining people). Her visit was completely unpublicized and she requested no official assistance. She spent two of her three days here in Jaffna visiting demining sites. Ambassador had invited her to the residence upon her return from Jaffna. Unfortunately her return was delayed and she did not have time to come by before leaving for the airport and her return flight. She did mention that her husband hoped to visit here at some time.

CODEL DREIER

[1](#)4. (U) We sent in our country clearance cable for Codel Dreier today. We of course welcome the Codel but tried to point out in the cable that it will be extremely difficult to program anything substantive in the limited Saturday/Sunday that the Codel will be here, given that the preceding Friday and the following Monday/Tuesday are all national holidays and almost all Sri Lankans will be out of Colombo. We passed this word to the Codel before and were told not to worry, that they were "flexible." In our cable, we have tried to ask diplomatically if the Codel would rather just have a day of beach/sightseeing. If so, we would be happy to arrange that for them -- they just have to let us know. If someone there can phone someone on the Codel and (1) make sure they understand what the situation will be here and (2) try to get a more precise vision of what they really want to do, that would be a great help to us.

LUNSTEAD